

Connection between Emotional Intelligence and Coherence in EFL Writing

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Abstract

This research is an investigation of the relationship between the emotional intelligence of a group of Iranian English language learners and the coherence of the essays they produced. A 40-item TOEFL-type test of English proficiency including items on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension with the Cronbach's alpha reliability of .742, was planned to identify the proficient candidates who could produce substantive and meaningful texts. Moreover, a 33-item inventory of Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale and a task of essay writing on a specific topic were administered. From 110 candidates who took the test, questionnaire and the task, 79 subjects completely submitted them. Forty-five students managed to score above 23 out of 40 on the proficiency test; therefore, their emotional profiles and essays were further analyzed. For objective assessment of the coherence of the essays, Bamberg's (1984) Holistic Coherence Scale was used with five points ranging from 'fully coherent' (4) to 'unscorable' (0). The Spearman's rho test was used in investigating the association between the coherence of the essays and the emotional intelligence of their writers. Flying in the face of the researchers' expectation, an insignificant relationship was observed.

Keywords: Coherence, Emotional Intelligence, Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale, Writing, Bamberg's Holistic Coherence Scale.

تاریخ وصول : ۹۱/۱۲/۲۳، تاریخ تصویب: ۹۲/۵/۳۰

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Introduction

Nowadays the dust-covered themes of “Know Thyself” in Memphis Temple, “Internal Manipulation” of Shaolin Monastery, and “Personal Evolution” at Mysticism School have been reinstated as emotional intelligence (EI) and become a buzzword. Daniel Goleman, the major advocate of EI, defines this bipolar construct at its personal level “such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swapping the ability to think, to emphasize and to hope” (1995, p. 34). Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer stress the “within” side of EI as “the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought; to understand emotions and emotional meanings, to reflectively regulate emotions in ways that promote emotional and intellectual growth” (cited in Stein & Book, 2006, p. 14).

The other side of EI invokes social abilities such as ‘empathy’ or learning to tune into how others feel and ‘social skills’ or learning to handle feelings well in interactions with others. In other words, “being emotionally intelligent means to be able to acknowledge and handle emotions ... in others” (Mortiboys, 2005, p. 7). For Yeung (2009), “emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, understand, and manage moods and feelings in ... other people” (p. 3).

Bar-On (2006) recapitulates these with-in and with-out skills as “intrapersonal and interpersonal skills” which are, in turn, dealing with “managing oneself or the ability to know one’s emotions and managing relationships with others.” Besides, Sparrow and Knight assert that “emotional intelligence is a characterization of our habitual stance towards self and the world, which is determined largely by the attitudes we hold” (2006, xi). Goleman properly knits these two extremes mediated by EI: “[emotional intelligence] is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (1995, p 317).

The influential camp into EI is socio-interactionism (socio-culturalism, socio-constructivism), which postulates human development mostly in interaction with the outer world. Its fans

believe that humans are inherently social beings, interactively learning from their surroundings and context, which provides tools for learning (Smidt, 2009). It is understood that emotion is a social fact which is socially and dialogically, i.e., socio-culturally (not individually) constructed in the interactions of the agent with agents and/ or the environment. Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts (2002) believe that emotion is not a property of the individual, but of a discourse between individuals, actively constructed and negotiated during social interaction. Hawkey (2006) accentuates this already strong pulse: “emotionality lies at the intersection of the person and society, for all persons are joined to their societies through the self-feelings and emotions they feel and experience on a daily basis” (p.139).

This study was designed to explore the relationship between EI (a mediating factor in social relationship) and coherence (a socially-mediated skill in language and writing).

Coherence is one of the sub-skills in the demanding task of writing. Van Dijk defines it as “a semantic property of a discourse, based on the interpretation of the rest of the sentences into the message” (1977, p. 93). Or more simply, Richards claims that coherence is believed to be “the relationships which link the meanings of utterances in a discourse or of the sentences in a text” (Richards, 1992. p. 61).

Pilus believes that this semantic property calls for twofold attention since “the interpretation of coherence is from two divergent sources -linguistic and non-linguistic” (1996, pp. 44-54). Linguistically speaking, coherence is deemed as “the quality of meaning unity and purpose perceived in discourse” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 55). Non-linguistically, it is believed that coherence “is not an absolute quality of a text, but always relative to a particular receiver and context” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 55). Therefore; “it is important to note that the writer, the text, and the readers all interact in the constitution of coherence” (Pilus, 1996). In other words, coherence is a factual issue in writing which is ideologically-negotiated, interactively-built, and dialogically-transferred. Socio-culturally, coherence is a socially-mediated fact which is co-authored by the writer and the reader in a specific context.

To check these appealing theoretical remarks against the reality of learners' performance, this research sought to find empirical evidence to the following question:

Is there any relationship between emotional intelligence and coherence in the passages written by Iranian English learners?

The null hypothesis formulated was:

There is no relationship between emotional intelligence and coherence in the passages written by Iranian English learners.

Participants

To learn about the connection between EI and language learning, the researchers administered an English proficiency test, a task of essay writing, and the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale to 110 undergraduate students of English language and literature at Semnan University, Iran. The participants had all successfully taken the university entrance examination, which is annually held nation-wide in a standardized manner. The participants were sophomore, junior, and senior students who had passed general proficiency courses (Conversation I and II, Reading Comprehension I, II and III, Grammar I and II, and Paragraph and Essay Writing). The freshmen were excluded since they did not generally seem qualified to take the essay writing task. Seventy-nine students returned the questionnaire forms, answered the proficiency test, and did the essay writing task. Forty-five participants scored 23 (57%) or above out of 40 on the proficiency test so their emotional profiles and essays were chosen for further analyses.

Instruments

English Language Proficiency Test

A 40-item multiple choice English language proficiency test measured the participants' verbal competence in structure, written expression, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. To this end, 70 questions were drawn out of Longman (Phillips, 1995), Cambridge (Gear, 1993), and NTC (Broukal & Nolan-Woods, 1991) preparatory TOEFL books. The items were subsumed under two sections of 'Structure and Written Expression' (Section A), and 'Vocabulary and

Reading Comprehension' (Section B). Each section started with directions and examples. Structure and Written Expression contained 10 sentence completion items and 10 items with incorrect words or phrases to be identified. For the vocabulary part of Section Two, the respondents were to choose the words or phrases that could replace the underlined words or phrases. The reading comprehension part included two passages; each accompanied by five multiple choice questions. The test was checked with a pilot group for the appropriate duration, difficulty of questions, and possible problems. The Cronbach's alpha equation measured the reliability of the final version of the whole test as .742, and the reliability of Structure and Written Expression, and Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension as .631, and .543, respectively.

Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale

The 33-item Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) was used in order to obtain the emotional profile of the candidates. Perez, Petrides, and Furnham (2005) observe that "[SEIS] has been used extensively in the literature and can be employed as a short measure of global trait EI" (p. 129) with a reliability range of 0.70-0.85. The developers of the scale describe it as follows:

[it] is based on Salovey and Mayer's (1997) original model of emotional intelligence...the items composing the subscales are as follows: Perception of Emotion, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others' Emotions, Utilization of Emotion...[accordingly] respondents rate themselves on the items using a five-point scale. Respondents require an average five minutes to complete the scale...total scale scores are calculated by reverse coding items 5, 28 and 33, and then summing all items. Scores can range from 33 to 165, with higher scores indicating more characteristic emotional intelligence (Schutte, Malouff, and Bhullar, 2009, p. 120).

To minimize the cultural biases and misunderstandings, this scale was translated into Persian-- the candidates' mother tongue-- and piloted with 20 learners. Feedback from them was considered to make sure about its comprehensibility, accuracy, and cultural relevance.

Essay Writing

The researchers assembled a series of argumentative topics from writing tutorial books-- *Doing Academic Writing in Education* (Richards & Miller, 2008), *Academic Writing* (Bailey, 2006), *Public and Professional Writing* (Surma, 2005), *Academic Writing* (Bailey, 2003), *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (Swales & Feak, 1994). Six topics in the pool of topics were selected by the researchers and presented to 10 English language students to write about. These pilot students were then interviewed on their familiarity with the topics, the topics' novelty, and which topic they would suggest as the best essay topic. "Being Far from the Family Makes Me Independent. Agree/Disagree? Discuss." was chosen as the final essay topic, as, among other things, it furnished an outlet for learners to argumentatively knit their feelings and cognition. On a second pilot study, the appropriate time was determined. Finally, The candidates wrote an essay on the chosen topic within set conditions.

Data Collection, Scoring and Analysis

The necessary data were collected in two sessions. In the first session, the participants took the linguistic test, which took 60 minutes on the average. They also did the writing task, which took 25 minutes on the average. The subjects' rough drafts on the writing topic were collected at the end of the session. In the second session, they answered the SEIS in 5 minutes. These measures were administered to 110 participants from students in three consecutive academic years. Seventy-nine candidates managed to complete all the three inquiries.

For objective assessment of the elusive concept of 'coherence', Bamberg's (1984) five point holistic scale (based upon the work of Halliday and Hasan, 1976) was used. Bamberg believes that this criterion is "a valid method of assessing essay coherence" and matches the principles of linguistics and discourse analysis (1984, p. 305-319). This scoring rubric involves holistically assessing coherence against a five-scale criterion (involving 7 factors; identifying topic, shifting topic or digressing, orienting the reader, organizing details, using cohesive ties, concluding with statement, flow of discourse) ranging from "fully coherent" (4), through "partially coherent" (3), "incoherent" (2), "incomprehensible" (1), to

“unscorable” (0). Weigle argues that assigning a mark to an essay, “each script is read quickly and then judged against a rating scale, or scoring rubric, that outlines the scoring criteria” (2002, p. 112). Bamberg herself believes that her scoring rubric “facilitates 1) the assessment of coherence holistically, rating the entire essay and not individual parts, 2) assessing coherence in terms of a list of features that create both global and local coherence, and 3) rating essays on a five-point ordinal scale that conceptualizes coherence as a quality achieved with varying degrees of success rather than as a dichotomous variable” (1984, p. 309).

According to Schutte et al. (2009), “total scale scores are calculated by reverse coding items 5, 28 and 33, and then summing all items. Scores can range from 33 to 165, with higher scores indicating more characteristic emotional intelligence” (p. 120). The writings’ coherence were assessed objectively through Bamberg’s (1984) Coherence Holistic Scale. This criterion (involving 7 factors; identifying topic, shifting topic or digressing, orienting the reader, organizing details, using cohesive ties, concluding with statement, flow of discourse) evaluated students’ writings against five degrees ranging from 4 (fully coherent) to 0 (unscorable). The writings’ coherence was assessed twice with a seven-day interval by one of the researchers. The data obtained were fed into SPSS16 Microsoft™ to get descriptive output as minimums, maximums, means, and standard deviations. Spearman’s rho correlation was applied to EQ (and its subscales) and coherence scores to obtain inferential information about their association.

Results

This study empirically explored the relationship between EI and the coherence in the essays of a group of Iranian foreign language learners. For this purpose, a task of essay writing, and the 33-item Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale as well as a test of English proficiency were administered to the participants.

The Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale portrayed the candidates’ emotional profiles through 33 five-point Likert items. Schutte et al. asserts that “scores can range from 33 to 165, with higher scores indicating more characteristic emotional intelligence”

(p. 120). The participants' scores varied from 87 to 145 with the average score of 120.05 (Table 1).

Table 1: *The candidates' Scores on Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total EQ	45	87	145	120.05	10.082
Valid N (list wise)	45				

The Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale sought out the subjects' emotional profiles through four subscales of 'perception of emotion', 'managing own emotions', 'managing others' emotions', and 'utilization of emotion' (Table 2).

Table 2: *The Candidates' Scores on SEIS's Subscales*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception of Emotion	45	24	40	31.73	4.552
Managing Own Emotions	45	22	37	29.46	3.678
Managing Others' Emotions	45	21	35	28.04	2.690
Utilization of Emotion	45	14	26	21.16	2.617
Valid N (list wise)	45				

To assess the writings' coherence, Bamberg's (1984) Coherence Holistic Scale was resorted to. The first round of assessment unveiled that 51 % of essays were evaluated as 'incoherent', 40 % as 'partially coherent', and only 8 % as 'fully coherent' (Table 3).

Table 3: *The Candidates' Coherence Scores for the First Round of Assessment*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Incoherent	23	51.1	51.1	51.1
Partially coherent	18	40.0	40.0	91.1
Fully coherent	4	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

To increase the ideal authenticity and to decrease the attempted subjectivity of scoring as well as skirting the memory effect, the scripts were all read and assessed de novo after seven days. The second round of evaluation revealed that 19 essays were written ‘incoherently’, 23 were ‘partially coherent’ and only three were ‘fully coherent’ (Table 4). Table 5 shows the inter-rater reliability of these two rounds of evaluation.

Table 4: *The Candidates’ Coherence Scores for the Second Round of Assessment*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Incoherent	19	42.2	42.2	42.2
	Partially coherent	23	51.1	51.1	93.3
	Fully coherent	3	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: *The Inter-rater Reliability of the Two Rounds of Coherence Assessment*

			Coherence1	Coherence2
Spearman's rho	Coherence1	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.553**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	45	45
	Coherence2	Correlation Coefficient	.553**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	45	45

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To investigate the connection of the participants EI and the coherence of their writing, Spearman correlation analysis was conducted and bore the negative but insignificant value of $r = -.160$, ($p < 0.05$) (Table 6).

Table 6: Spearman's Rho Correlation Analysis between EQ and Coherence

			EQ	Coherence
Spearman's rho	EQ	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.160
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.293
		N	45	45
	Coherence	Correlation Coefficient	-.160	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.293	
		N	45	45

The Spearman's rho correlation tests were also conducted among EI subscales and the writings' coherence (Table 7): 'perception of emotion' and coherence ($r = -.139$, $p < 0.05$), 'managing own emotions' and coherence ($r = -.090$, $p < 0.05$), 'managing others' emotions' and coherence ($r = -.214$, $p < 0.05$), 'utilization of emotion' and coherence ($r = .074$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 7: Spearman's Rho Correlation Analyses Among EQ Sub-scales and Coherence

			Perception of emotion	Managing own emotion	Managing others emotion	Utilization of emotion	Coherence
Spearman's rho	Perception of emotion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.157	.319*	.139	-.139
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.304	.033	.363	.361
		N	45	45	45	45	45
Managing own emotions		Correlation Coefficient	.157	1.000	.346*	.061	-.090
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.304	.	.020	.690	.555
		N	45	45	45	45	45
Managing others emotions		Correlation Coefficient	.319*	.346*	1.000	-.031	-.214
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.020	.	.837	.159
		N	45	45	45	45	45
Utilization of emotion		Correlation Coefficient	.139	.061	-.031	1.000	.074
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.363	.690	.837	.	.628
		N	45	45	45	45	45
Coherence		Correlation Coefficient	-.139	-.090	-.214	.074	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.361	.555	.159	.628	.
		N	45	45	45	45	45

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As we can see, the relationship between the two variables, EI and coherence, is loose and the null hypothesis, which claims that there is no relationship between EI and the essays' coherence is confirmed.

Discussion

The lack of association between the emotional profile of the participants in this study and the coherence of the writings they produced seems, at first glance, counterintuitive and flies in the face of claims in the literature about the consequences of high or low

emotional shrewdness. However, if this finding is based on reliable data, it may provide additional insights regarding the relationship targeted by this study.

One consideration is that writing is an off-line and deliberate act. Unlike real-time communication, which is highly dependent on the social skills and empathy of the interlocutors, in writing the authors have the opportunity to compensate for the missing micro-skills necessary for effective communication. While it is not denied that even with writing tasks, social savvy, interpersonal imagination, and the ability to empathize with and cater for readers' expectations are essential, writers can conceivably bring in other resources and factors in to cancel out or override the impact of the emotional factor.

The exact mechanism of the interplay remains to be worked out and elaborated; but, it seems the relationship of EI and coherence is similar to some other situations, where an effect is postulated in principle or observed in laboratory conditions with simple, isolated tasks but when it comes to real situations or tasks, which take a constellation of skills and sub-skills, the effect targeted for measurement is diluted and dwarfed, either directly or in interaction with other relevant factors. Bialystok (2006) makes a similar point in discussing why the impact of bilingualism is observable only in young or early stages and with simple discrete-point tasks (see also Cummins, 1979). A related explanation can be that in order for EI of foreign language learners to become operative and make a significant impact on the coherence of their writing, their proficiency and the level of their writing should reach a certain threshold. Emotionally intelligent learners who are at a low level of writing proficiency cannot make their intelligence apparent in action.

The loose relationships reported here may also have to do with the fact that the participants studied English in a foreign context. When the developmental trajectory of knowledge or skills does not match the natural route that emergent systems cover and are not consistent with and supported by natural mechanisms of the learners, the catalyst function of EI may not get the opportunity to exert its influence. In other words, while EI is a facilitator of language-related skills in natural context, where learning happens in congruity with all learning mechanisms, the catalyst function of EI does not become operational

when there is not much “interoperability” between it and the processes involved in the target learning.

A related cause of not observing a positive correlation between coherence and the emotional measure in this study may be the particular learning and use strategies that the participants have resorted to. They may have used strategies which involve other types of intelligence and bring different aspects of their resources and personality traits into play. Goleman’s (2011) remarks in his website endorse this argument:

There is no necessary relationship between emotional intelligence and a cognitive ability like language learning.... The neural circuits that govern self-management and relationship skills -- the two main parts of EI -- are independent of the areas for verbal and other cognitive capabilities. On the other hand, it may depend on how you are learning the language. The one way in which EI might facilitate language learning is if you go to that culture and learn the language by living there. The more naturally occurring opportunities you have to practice, the quicker your learning will be. And EI should make it easier for you to cultivate the ongoing relationships with people who can help you learn.

Another conclusion can be that linguistic production and behavior is something different from emotional orientations and other social behavior. It is not rare to find coherent and commendable pieces of writing produced by authors who do not characteristically enjoy much control over their own emotions and it is unlikely they are very sensitive to other people’s feelings and thoughts. Even well-known authors such as Edgar Allen Poe, Franz Kafka, Graham Greene, Sylvia Platt, Dylan Thomas, Tennessee Williams, and Virginia Woolf, who are known to have suffered from chronic clinical psychological diseases with negative personal and social consequences, produced successful poems, essays, novels and short stories, which enjoy high levels of intra- and intertextual coherence.

However, instead of concluding categorically that emotional intelligence is irrelevant to writing and its coherence, we had better consider its relevance in an ecological perspective and study the relationship in interaction with many other relevant factors which may be both affected by and modify the effect of the writers’ EQ.

Conclusion

The existence of a loose relationship between coherence in writing and the EI of the writers may, on the surface, indicate that presence or lack of some or all of the sub-components of EI will be of no consequence for the coherence in writing. But, this linear interpretation may be jumping to premature conclusions. Even if EI and coherence are not tightly associated, it does not mean that EI has no role in writing and its coherence. It may be playing a crucial role in indirect and subtle ways, which do not reveal themselves in direct measurement of the relationship. The fact that one source of coherence is the reader's background knowledge and the readers and writers dialogically interact in the construction of coherence (Pilus, 1996), the possible impact of a myriad of other contributory factors, and writing being an off-line activity, which allows second thoughts, may all help explain the counter-intuitive results obtained in this study. Another important point to consider is that the writing the participants in this study produced suffered from much incoherence. This can be a reminder that the EI effect may be a potential that exerts its impact more visibly at higher levels of proficiency. However, the validity of these possible explanations can only be endorsed by more in-depth elaborate studies which explore the mechanism through which coherence is created and take an ecological and dynamic perspective to this issue. Among many other things, such studies should include more participants from a variety of contexts and levels and look at coherence not as a final product but in a chain of cognitive events which involve the complex and dynamic interplay of many factors including the ingredients of EI.

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Appendix A: Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale

Perception of Emotion (items 5, 9, 15, 18, 19, 22, 25, 29, 32, 33)

Managing Own Emotions (2, 3, 10, 12, 14, 21, 23, 28, 31)

Managing Others' Emotions (1, 4, 11, 13, 16, 24, 26, 30)

Utilization of Emotion (6, 7, 8, 17, 20, 27)

Directions: Each of the following items asks you about your emotions or reactions associated with emotions. After deciding whether a statement is generally true for you, use the 5-point scale to respond to the statement. Please circle the “1” if you strongly disagree that this is like you, “2” if you somewhat disagree that this is like you, “3” if you neither agree nor disagree that this is like you, the “4” if you somewhat agree that this is like you, and the “5” if you strongly agree that this is like you. There is no right or wrong answers. Please give the response that best describes you.

1=strongly disagree

2=somewhat disagree

3=neither agree nor disagree

4=somewhat agree

5=strongly agree

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I expect that I will do well on most things I try. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Other people find it easy to confide in me. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. I expect good things to happen. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I like to share my emotions with others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. I arrange events others enjoy. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. I seek out activities that make me happy. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

17. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.	1 2 3 4 5
18. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.	1 2 3 4 5
19. I know why my emotions change.	1 2 3 4 5
20. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas.	1 2 3 4 5
21. I have control over my emotions.	1 2 3 4 5
22. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.	1 2 3 4 5
23. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on.	1 2 3 4 5
24. I compliment others when they have done something well.	1 2 3 4 5
25. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send.	1 2 3 4 5
26. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I experienced this event myself.	1 2 3 4 5
27. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas.	1 2 3 4 5
28. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail.	1 2 3 4 5
29. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.	1 2 3 4 5
30. I help other people feel better when they are down.	1 2 3 4 5
31. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.	1 2 3 4 5
32. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.	1 2 3 4 5
33. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B: Bamberg's (1984) Holistic Coherence Scale

4 = Fully Coherent

- Writer identifies the topic.
- Writer does not shift topics or digress.
- Writer orients the reader by creating a context or situation.
- Writer organizes details according to a discernible plan that is sustained throughout the entire essay.
- Writer skillfully uses cohesive ties such as lexical cohesion, reference, etc. to link sentences and/or paragraphs together.
- Writer concludes with a statement that gives the reader a definite sense of closure.
- Discourse flows smoothly -few or no grammatical and/or mechanical errors interrupt the reading process.

3 = Partially Coherent

- If the writer does not explicitly identify the topic, s/he provides enough details so that the reader can probably identify the specific subject.
- Writer has one main topic but there may be minor digressions.
- Writer provides reader some orientation, either by briefly suggesting the context or by directly announcing the topic.
- Writer organizes details according to a plan, but may not sustain it throughout or may list details in parts of the essay.
- Writer uses some cohesive ties such as lexical cohesion, conjunction, reference, etc. to link sentences and/or paragraphs together.
- Writer does not usually conclude with a statement that creates a sense of closure.
- Discourse generally flows smoothly although occasional grammatical and/or mechanical errors may interrupt the reading process.

2 = Incoherent

Some of the following prevent the reader from integrating the text into a coherent whole:

- Writer does not identify the topic and the reader would be unlikely to infer or guess the topic from the details provided.
- Writer shifts topics or digresses frequently from the topic.
- Writer assumes the reader share his/her context and provides little or no orientation.
- Writer has no organizational plan in most of the text and frequently relies on listing.
- Writer uses few cohesive ties such as lexical cohesion, conjunction, reference, etc. to link sentences and/or paragraphs together.
- Discourse is irregular or rough because mechanical and/or grammatical errors frequently interrupt the reading process.

1 = Incomprehensible

Many of the following prevent the reader from making sense of the text:

- Topic cannot be identified.
- Writer moves from topic to topic by association or digresses frequently.

- Writer assumes the reader shares his/her context and provides no orientation.
- Writer has no organizational plan and either lists or follows associative order.
- Writer uses very few cohesive ties such as lexical cohesion, conjunction, reference, etc. and sentences do not seem connected or linked together.
- Discourse flow is very rough or irregular because writer omits structure words, inflectional ending and /or makes numerous grammatical and mechanical errors that continuously interrupt the reading process.

0 = Unscorable

- Essay consists of only one T-Unit.
- Writer writes only to reject the task.